

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname.)—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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SHORT SIGHT.

How alarmingly general the use of spectacles has become. It is almost the minority who do not use them. Now if some one would present the world with spectacles for mental short-sight! We are afraid these are even more sadly needed, and the use of them in viewing one neighbor's actions would reveal to us motives to win admiration, whereas we now mete out only censure.

"Actions wear a different look when motives are assigned them." We judge largely by results without considering the material a man has to start with. We look for virtue in a positive quantity, not in a comparative state, but with our mental eye glass we would average up before deciding for or against. We would take into consideration the point from which we started and consider progress and effort.

For example, let us take the good-natured boy and the close fist-ed one and start them out in life, not forgetting the handicaps to be allowed in the race. Later on in life we need them, when we want a friend. The good-natured boy has developed into a good-natured man, and the close fist-ed one, let us say, the average business man, who has been continually on the lay-away tack; and though he sometimes opened heart and purse such occasions were rare.

Now, in our need, we turn to both our early friends and find No. 1 as ready and willing as ever to help.

It is no struggle for him; no effort is needed. No. 2 has a struggle and a hard one. Self, whom he has perhaps fought manfully all along, is still striving for a hearing and wants to retain what has been stored up by such labour. But out of the struggle self comes second best and our No. 2 also gives us his help.

Of course we receive without shame from the former; but are we not really more indebted to the latter? Has he not given us more—given what cost him? and surely his effort pleased God, though his hesitation hurt us.

We admire the foot-ball hero with his broken nose or disabled arm. Those, however, who show scars of the tussle with self offend our sight, and to those of unbroken cuticle we give our love and respect. We are all born with some evil tendencies—no blame to us—and with good inclinations as well—no credit to us.

But the poor-under-dog who has the former predominance is hedged off from the others and little account taken of his efforts. Perhaps we cannot love him, but surely we can appreciate his struggles.

RANDOM THOUGHTS.

Glancing through the pages of a contemporary the other day we came across a paragraph offering a prize for the best anecdote of any living great man.

The craving which men have to know the details of the private life of anyone distinguished from the commonality by talent or position is an inexplicable phenomenon; but one which persists in remaining in force long after we have decided that it has no business to exist. Is it that we yearn to claim fellowship with intellect through the sacred instincts which intellect and mediocrity share alike? Or is it through that loftier feeling which urges us to ally ourselves by sympathy with all that is highest and noblest in human nature? In this rapid age we should suppose there was not time to look beneath the surface, and ponder there the domestic joys and sorrows of a great man or profound scholar.

An anecdote from the life of a favorite author often produces in us a sensation we might experience in being admitted for the first time to the fireside of a dear friend. Washington Irving tells us: "there is a companionship between the writer and the reader which is ever new, active and immediate: he lives for us more than for himself, and in dying leaves us an inheritance not of empty name, but of bright gems of thought, treasures of wisdom, and golden veins of language."

Though many of the anecdotes are trivial, they somehow fix the personality of a man of genius more firmly in the mind of posterity than his greatest virtues. King Alfred is, despite the iconoclastic critic, better remembered as the disguised soldier burning the cake of his peasant-hostess than as the intrepid chieftain and wise law maker. Prince Charlie has, by means of his romantic adventures, endeared himself to the Scottish nation, while no such halo of love encircles the brows of the First or Second Charles of England, even though the martyr King has won by his tragical death a separate niche in the Valhalla of history.

In all ages and all climes learning and wealth have seldom gone together, and we have, throughout the length and breadth of literature, anecdotes of artists, poets and authors whose daily wants were in sad contrast with their aspirations. Often it would seem as if the brighter the genius, the more relentless the poverty which, shadow-like, pursued it unceasingly. Most of us are familiar with the story of the Three Students of the Middle Ages who possessed but one cloak between them, so that while one attended a lecture the other two remained in bed.

In Paris, which was at that time the world's great centre of learning, it is one almost unbroken record of hardship and poverty endured by the sturdy knowledge-seekers of medieval days. Turning to the chivalrous land of Germany we find in the same century the school of poor minstrels, the wandering troubadours, who, as a writer tells us, "led a most strange and romantic life. With little else save their sword, fiddle or harp and perchance a bit of love ribbon from their sweetheart, they wandered from village to village, from castle to castle, welcomed always with gladness and accepting remuneration with the proud unconcern of the strolling vagrant. The young German knight, compelled by custom to saunter out into the world, and, thanks to poverty, to keep on sauntering all his life-time, was hardly better off than the minnesingers. Later on we hear of the melancholy Schiller translating French books at a shilling a page and wasting much of his ability in literary hack-work. No wonder Goethe should cry out in righteous wrath when offered three pounds for a drama, "If Europe praised me, what has Europe done for me."

Back again to England, and on through a long list of those whose names "echo through the corridors of time." History again tells us that but few of the mighty ones of the intellectual world had aught else but the misery and distress of poverty. Should we desire to see them, many of their homes lie in any other direction than that which leads to the stone-mansion districts. Mayhap we shall have to pick our way through slumming courts and even mount garret-stairs, for in such unlovely localities such bright spirits as Goldsmith, Johnson, Chatterton have their abode.

Who does not love the old Doctor in spite of all his crustiness? And did not our admiration spring into being on the day at Oxford when he flung out of the window the new pair of shoes which the young nobleman presented to him. No charity for him. His old shoes might be down at heel, but they were his own.

In America, the "El dorado" of untaught European imagination, the scholar was hardly destined to a happier lot than in the old-world cities, where learning is supposed to have a traditional value. The life of Nathaniel Hawthorne presents various instances of want and manful struggle. Driven by extreme necessity to devote himself to literature, he wrote "The Scarlet Letter," and, we are told that during its composition kind friends came to the rescue and kept the wolf from the door. When completed Hawthorne sent the novel to a friend of sound judgment and an unsparing critic. The friend raced through the MS.; hurried then to Hawthorne's house and meeting the little boy Julian caught him in his arms exclaiming: "Child; child; do you know what a father you have!"

Another American genius was less fortunate. We refer to the poet Poe, who, impulsive and gifted far beyond the ordinary mortal, was a too ardent votary at the shrine of Bacchus to do

either justice to his magnificent abilities or to lay hold of happiness, and the publishers did not do anything to ameliorate his condition. Perhaps they were debarred from helping Poe for the same reason that makes good people blind to the outstretched hand—"they might spend it on drink." For "The Raven" he received \$10, and we hear of him writing to a friend to borrow \$5—for the purpose of buying delicacies for his wife Virginia, who was dying. And yet he was at that time known in two continents. And when he entered an office in New York and mentioned who he was, men turned around to look at the poet whose name was already enrolled among the great men of America.

And there are to-day not a few with lips touched with some thing akin to the blazing coal of genius whose names are never blazoned forth to the world, because for some reason or another they choose to remain hidden. Some of them are in every big centre living in a district except Bohemia—a land of indolence and unfortunateness of the morrow, but a land also whose denizens write world-songs, batimes, chisel wondrous statues and who are credited with a kindness and generosity that are ofttimes lacking in those who regulate their conduct according to the standards of orthodox society.

A HUNDRED YEARS.

Well, here we are, with the lights still burning on the Christmas tree—they're growing a little dim to be sure, for to-morrow will be twelfth day, and then—poof, out they go. The children will all have trooped back to school, and we shall be alone again. Then, the old Christmas tree will be gathered up and thrown out in the yard, where it will lie until the spring. George will likely tear it branch from branch and spread them over the flower beds, to protect them from the frost, and the only memory to remind us of past festivities will be the smell of the fir that comes to us whenever we open the window—that pungent odor, which, to us Canadians, has been associated with Christmas ever since childhood.

We confess we are always sorry when the season of Christmas is at an end, for at this time whatever of good is left in us comes up again to the surface; the past resurges out of its grave—ah, me, a sad-eyed ghost some times!—and those in whose homes the old-time customs are still kept up at Christmas, do wisely: where the old fashioned games are played; where the tree is alight with gleaming candles, and loaded down with presents; where the old throw off care, and, dancing with the youngsters, for one day at least, forget the burden of the years, for the old-time customs were the best, the truest, the honestest. Old times! the very words give us a pang, for are we not drifting swiftly away from those good old days—and here we are entering a new century.

Siff and starched, and swift with the scientific rush, automobiles, telephones, and the swif of electricity. Why! how could we dare so much as breathe old fashion to this severely progressive gentleman who sits in his automobile and receives us. What would an old custom look like coming in here? Like a poor, simple, old woman, making her appearance in a great ball room. She is bewildered by the strangeness of the scene—dazzled by the electric lights. She looks around for some familiar face—and there is Mrs. X., sitting with her daughters, in a prominent position near the door. But Mrs. X. scarcely returns the old lady's salutation—"Know you, Madame? Whatever are you thinking of—surely there must be some mistake! We are now in society; have given up all simple customs, and, with our old clothes, have thrown off our old friends." Oh, dearest Mrs. X., would not hypocrisy be even better than this daring cynicism—this open heartlessness!

Take us back, then, to the old time days, when men and women were true-hearted and sincere, and lived simply and honestly before their fellows. This is no over-rated picture.

The spirit of hollowness is rampant throughout the length and breadth of modern society—a dressed up gilded harlequin, strutting about and elbowing his way in the throng;

but when the lights are put out, and the guests depart, he changes to a rattling skeleton, who through the watches of the night keeps whispering to more than one weary heart—*vanitas vanitatum!* Trying to be what we are not. Labelling ourselves XXX, when it is all adulteration. Keeping up an empty show: living beyond our means; courting the world's adulation, while our hearts are torn and bleeding, with the strain and tension of the bottomless sham and pretence.

Glitter and show! no matter what the cost, or the heart burn. "Confess," says Thackeray, "If you have not been at feasts—or at least known of them—when it struck you the viands, the plate—aye! the guests—were all sham, like Cinderella's coach and footmen, and could turn into rats and mice, and an old shoe or a cabbage stalk, as soon as we were out of the house, and the clock struck 12." We ask, though vainly, what is it all for? Does it make for us any true friends? Let adversity come, and we have the bleak cold answer. Any among us who have lived long enough to know the world realize this. In the day of trial, where are those whilom friends?—turned their backs, shrugged their shoulders, with a: "We were quite aware the 'Swaggers' were going at too rapid a pace. We rather pity poor old 'Swagger'—not a bad sort; but it is all his wife's fault—too keen on society." Then they vote it a bore—"for their parties were excellent. But of course, we cannot be expected to know them any longer. People like that have no right to deceive the public, etc., etc." And thus, Hobs and Nobs, sit in easy chairs at the club, and chep the poor 'Swaggers' to mince-meat and gobbie up with excessive relish every anecdote of their past extravagance. Poor Mrs. Swagger! We pity her from our heart, and most particularly do we pity her as she lies, wide-eyed and sleepless, counting the long night hours until the dawn breaks, and the weary day begins again.

Well, when we began, we did not think we should have drifted away from the subject like this, but life is not all together a joke, you know, and we come upon thoughts—suddenly—as one meets a funeral in the streets. Still we cannot help wearying of the artificiality of it all—of the wear and tear and rush of life; of the money-making, the getting ahead, the trying one to out-do the other: of the false friends and petty jealousies that make up the sum of life; and which din and hum round us, and wag and jar, till we are fain to leave it all and seek some sequestered spot, where the brook murmurs musically, where we can lie down in the stillness and listen to the pines rustling overhead. As we look up at their tall tops, the blue sky, clear and serene, meets our gaze—and we know that heaven is not far off.

We are soothed, softened, and subdued—our irritable mood changes, and we recall the good and the true. Men and women who are taking their part in life, in the fullest meaning of the word; and even if some among them have passed away—as youth and beauty pass away and perish—we still have that beloved memory to keep us in faith with human nature. Emerson tells us that all the ugliness in the world is the result of sin; that we should all be beautiful, if it were not for our perverse passions. Well, we can at least make the world more beautiful, make our friends happier, if we will begin to have kind thoughts and to do good deeds—for no religion is worth having if it does not help to lighten the load of our more heavily burdened brother, or if it does not inspire us with thoughts which make us both glad to live and fit to die.

And here, while we are sermonizing you have been handed your presents from the tree. What is yours? A booklet—1899 shaking hands with 1900 across the border of the years! Here is the early nineteenth century depicted, in the horseman in Wellington, and three cornered hat, plowing through the snow, bearing the invitation to Xmas dinner. Turn over the page: there is the merry party arriving, and tumbling pell mell out of the carriage, while the hospitable door of the old country mansion stands wide open, and the family

have all mustered to embrace their guests and give them for the time the hospitality of open heart as well as open house.

But all this took place a hundred years ago, away at the beginning of the last century. A hundred years! It is a solemn thought—one which, standing on the threshold of the new, should fain make us pause a little. After all what will anything matter a hundred years hence: all the wrong and hatred and oppression roll into one gigantic blur—justice and mercy and kindness alone shine forth and are remembered. And those of our friends who have left us by the wayside, to struggle on alone. How do we recall them? Is it that they were society leaders, or because of their boasted ancestry, handed down to them from the gothic ages? Ah, no—we remember only the good they have done, their kindly cheerful spirit; their love of their fellow-men. It is this blessed memory of good deeds that enshrines those dear hearts and true—"whose angel faces smile which I have loved long since, and lost awhile." Our dead, says a well-known writer, "we have not really lost them—they have only stepped into the next room; presently you will get up and follow them, and then the door will close upon you, and you will be seen no more."

LOCATING THE RESPONSIBILITY.

The Church in every age has to blush for the scandalous conduct of some of her careless and disobedient children, but in every age also she has been defended and glorified by sons and daughters whose lives reflected the strength and beauty of her interior loveliness. If she has to look out into the night of unbelief for some of her misguided children who have abandoned her divine direction, she is also consoled in the fidelity and confidence that brings the body of the faithful suppliantly to her feet.

What constitutes the real difference between these classes? It is the difference between obedient submission and stubborn self-reliance. It is the old war cry: "I will not serve" and "Thy holy will be done." What is the wellspring of love and obedience? God's grace first of all, but back of that it is found in the dropping of the seed of proper principles and sentiments in the hearts of the young. Man is not simply body and soul. He is everything that goes to furnish his mind and mold his character. He is largely what his education is. He is largely what goes to make up the sum of what he gathers in the paths of knowledge. Stripped of the informing grace of God and of received knowledge, man is little more than the animal—little elevated above the beast. It is the superadded gifts of God together with the training of parents that lifts him to be what his Maker intended him to be. Without the application of God's saving grace, he may become a more enlightened animal, but still an animal. Without the interference of parental guidance—without grace and without education, he must shift like a rudderless boat upon the sea of human passion. By Providence every man is left in a large measure, particularly in the formative years of his existence, in the hands and at the mercy of his parents. By physical generation he is very largely, in temperament and character, what they make him, while his mental bent will in a great measure reflect their own or the delegated preceptors to whom they entrust him.

Knowledge of every kind is, as a rule, communicated. Man may learn by experience, but he learns little by experience that he was not taught by others. This with regard to the simplest duties and laws of nature—more truly with regard to his scientific acquisitions—but absolutely so with regard to divine truth and the knowledge of the spiritual. *Fides ex auditu*—faith comes by hearing. This is the divine verdict—it is the divine law. Man must be taught the faith. It comes by no natural law and is learned by no experience. Faith, the knowledge of God, our duties to God, all these must be taught.

If, then, man is so completely at the mercy of his parents for the knowledge of his duties to God, the generations, one after another, must depend upon fathers and mothers for the character of their men and women. The Church must have glory or shame in them in the measure in which Catholic parents faithfully discharge the serious obligations of parentage or neglect them. The heroes of the coming generation are in training now. The children of shame and wickedness of to-morrow are rehearsing now. Every Catholic home is carrying on this education—training athletes for the spiritual battles sure to come. Every Catholic parent by a religious or a godless education is schooling his child for victory or defeat—a victory or defeat that must in the nature of things glorify or confound him. The way to

victory is over the road of religious education—education in Catholic schools.—Catholic Universe.

RELIGION vs THEOLOGY.

There is a great deal of talk going on just now among those who want a religion and don't know exactly where to find it, about "dogma." "Dogma" is a word of evil import. Theology is styled "intellectual ritualism" and is reproached with having obscured the Christ—with having seduced men away from the sweetness and simplicity of primitive Christianity. Amid the strife of creeds "vital" religion has been neglected. Time has shown that "dogmas" are transient. Christ's teachings need no revision. Men must anchor themselves, so to speak, to Jesus Christ and then, despite the ever changing currents of human thought, they will be safe.

It is easy to understand this protest against "theology." The so-called "Reformers," who arrogated to themselves doctrinal infallibility, are now found to have been merely venting their own notions. Their followers have ruefully come to the conclusion that infallibility in doctrine is neither possible nor desirable. To stick to Christ is the one thing necessary. Christ taught religion but His Apostles and their successors taught dogmatic theology. What the world—of course there is question of the Protestant world—needs to-day is a return to religion pure and undefiled.

Now, all this sounds well, but the fact is "that Christianity without dogma is inconceivable." "Dogma," according to Harnack, is used in three senses. It means: 1. The historical doctrines of Christianity; or, 2. The historical facts on which the Christian religion is grounded—such, for example, as are mentioned in the Apostles' Creed; or, 3. The scientific formulation of the contents of the Gospel. Perhaps the neo-Christians will after all, admit "dogmas" in the first and second sense, though repudiating them in the third. But even in this sense, Harnack's principle, with which we begin, must hold good. Of course the supposition is that those who talk about anchoring themselves to Christ mean the real Christ, the Christ of history, not a sort of ideal Being who is admired pretty much as men admire the hero of the *Æneid* or the mysterious Child of the San Sisto. There are people who hear the Gospel as they would hear a lovely song, whose interest in it is purely æsthetic. But with these dilettanti we have no concern. We are speaking of those whose conception of religion is one of personal discipleship to Jesus Christ—of obedience to Him on all points on which He claims obedience. Open the Gospels in which the conditions of personal discipleship are laid down. There is no escaping the conclusion that Christ was the author of a theology whose principles must inform the Christian life. He made known a body of truths concerning Himself, His Father and the divine purposes regarding man, the acceptance of which is the primary condition of Christian discipleship. To keep that revelation before the eyes of men, and to preserve it in its original purity, He founded a Church which He promised to be with all days even to the consummation of the world. Instead of concluding from the failure of their own dogmas, the futility of all dogma, the neo-Christians ought to study their Gospels a little more closely. The truth is somewhere for the mission of Christ was not in vain.

But to go back a little. Religious practice always supposes religious principles—dogmas—and this holds true whether Christianity be considered as purely ethical—relating to good conduct, or whether it relates to speculative truths of faith as well. Make it consist in morality, in a pure life, according to the teachings of Christ. Why follow such teachings? What claim has Christ to our obedience? Immediately we find ourselves confronted by dogmas. Make it consist in filial dependence on the all Father. Why acknowledge such a dependence? Immediately we find ourselves confronted with dogmas, for the service of God is a reasonable service. Take the matter of prayer. All prayer rests on belief in the dogmas of the goodness and providence of God. Some of the neo-Christians, President Hyde of Bowdoin, see and proclaim the absolute necessity of theology, others, less clear-sighted, think otherwise.

We venture to think that good will come of the new movement, which, repudiating the exploded Concessions of Protestantism, called upon men to go back to Christ for their religion. The earnest seeker after truth will find in the record of the words and works of the founder of Christianity conclusive proof of the claims of the ancient Church.—Providence Visitor.

GOOD BOOKS FOR SALE.

We should be pleased to supply any of the following books at prices given: The Christian Father, price, 35 cents (cloth); The Christian Mother (cloth), 35 cents; Thoughts on the Sacred Heart, by Archbishop Walsh (cloth), 40 cents; Catholic Belief (paper) 25 cents, cloth (strongly bound) 50 cents. Address: Thos. Coffey, CATHOLIC RECORD office, London, Ontario.

He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord and He will repay Him. (Prov. xix, 17.)